

United States Embassy Dakar, Senegal
Message for U.S. Citizens: VOTING IN 2014
May 2, 2014

Your vote counts! Did you know that many recent U.S. elections have been decided by a margin smaller than the number of ballots cast by military and overseas voters? All states are required to count every absentee ballot as long as it is valid and reaches local election officials by the absentee ballot receipt deadline.

Follow a few simple steps to make sure that you can vote in the 2014 U.S. elections:

Registering to Vote: Complete a new [Federal Post Card Application \(FPCA\)](#). *Even if you have voted by absentee ballot in the past, you must complete a new [Federal Post Card Application \(FPCA\)](#) to vote in the 2014 elections.* The [FPCA](#) is accepted by all local election officials in all U.S. states and territories. It allows you to register to vote and to request absentee ballots for all regular, primary, run-off, and special elections for federal offices (President, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives) during the course of the year it is submitted in.

You can complete the FPCA **online** at [FVAP.gov](#). The online voting assistant will ask you questions specific to your state. It will tell you if your state allows the [FPCA](#) to be returned electronically or if you must submit a paper copy with original signature.

Receiving Your Ballot: Request Electronic Delivery! States are now required to send out ballots 45 days before a regular election for federal office (President, U.S. Senate or U.S. House of Representatives) and states generally send out ballots at least 30 days before primary elections. No matter which state you vote in, we encourage you to ask your local election officials to deliver your blank ballots to you electronically (by email, internet download, or fax, depending on your state). Be sure to include your email address on your FPCA to take advantage of the electronic ballot delivery option. You can now also confirm your [registration and ballot delivery online](#) for most states.

Researching the Candidates and Issues: Online Resources. Check out the [FVAP links page](#) for helpful resources that will aid your research of candidates and issues. Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues are widely available and easy to obtain via numerous websites such as [Project Smart Voter](#). You can also read national and hometown newspapers on-line, or search the Internet to locate articles and information. For information about election dates and deadlines, subscribe to FVAP's Voting Alerts (vote@fvap.gov). FVAP also shares Voting Alerts via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Returning Your Completed Ballot: Other Options. If your state requires you to return paper voting forms or ballots to local election officials, you can do so free of charge at the nearest embassy or consulate. They must be in either postage paid return envelopes or in envelopes

bearing sufficient domestic U.S. postage, and must also be addressed to the relevant local election officials.

If wish to send your voting forms and ballots via mail, you may place your voted ballot or forms in a U.S. postage-paid envelope addressed to your local election officials. Drop it off at the U.S. Embassy in Dakar, and we'll send it back home for you without the need to pay international postage. Alternatively, if you wish to use Senegal's postal system, be sure to affix sufficient international postage, and allow sufficient time for international mail delivery.

You may visit the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy to drop off forms and ask voting assistance questions from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM, or 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM Monday through Thursday.

If it's more convenient for you, you can also return your FPCA or ballot to your local election officials via international mail or professional courier service at your own expense.

Learn more at the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) website [FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov). If you have any questions about registering to vote overseas, please contact Dakar's Voting Assistance Officer at DakarACS@state.gov.